

# Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on March 17th 2006

The meeting was opened at 20:05 by Des Loughney in the presence of 20 members.

## Apologies

Apologies had been received from Frank Howie, Ray and May Fenouhlet.

## Minutes of the AGM of 25th March 2005

The minutes of the previous AGM having been circulated were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

(But Earlyburn is spelled with a y rather than an i.)

Proposed: Lorna McCalman

Seconded: Alan Pickup

## Annual Report and Accounts for 2005

These were formally presented.

Graham spoke to the narrative report.

Alan noted some points about the Accounts. He noted that the figure for income from the Lorimer Trust is incorrect. It appears that another donation was banked at the same time and these had both been noted as being from the Trust.

The Society are trying to move the deposit account away from the Bank of Scotland. We have had problems with changing the signatories and their interest rates are poor.

Despite the 80 % reduction we get as a charity, we are still having to pay a considerable sum to the City. We have applied for a discretionary rebate for the other 20 % but will not get this for the current year.

The electricity bill is very high. Partly this was because of underestimated billing for some time. But there does appear to be quite a high use of power even when we are not here (20 units per day seems typical).

Duncan Hale-Sutton asked if the money we have could be passed back to the Trust. It was felt that we are more likely to need to get money from the Trust.

There was discussion about the number of members we had. It was noted that we had kept some people on our membership list after they had failed to pay their subscription. This has now been rectified.

Des spoke about investment strategies. It was noted that the Trust rearranged their portfolio a few years ago.

Charlie Gleed pointed out to Des some time back that the Cooke refractor was in need of refurbishment. Des has started to find out who could do the necessary work. The Cooke in Dundee is about to be refurbished and it has been suggested by Dave Gavine that we should use this company "Heritage

Engineering”. The Officials in the City have recommended that we apply for a grant for this from the North and Leith Development Committee. Des will meet the official of the committee to discuss this. An initial examination would cost about £500 and the main work could cost around £5000.

Des noted that the buildings are in a serious state of disrepair. The City claim to be able to come up with funds for the Calton Hill project but this will be spread over the next five or six years. If we accept these assurances then it is worth staying at the Observatory. But if we don't believe them then we should consider moving elsewhere.

Des also noted that we need to draw people into the Society. Having a good programme of meetings is needed as are specialist meetings. Open Evenings help greatly. He noted that Evening Classes in Stirling and Dundee help them recruit. Dave Gavine might be able to give classes. There would be a fee charged for this.

Graham said that he didn't trust the City. He was not optimistic that the work would get done in a reasonable timescale. David Small said that we had to put together a plan.

Duncan said that we should start leaving now.

Danny proposed that we set a two year timescale for seeing action from the City. If that period expired then we would have to have a plan to leave.

Lorna suggested that we advertise meetings in the local press.

Steuart said that we need to send a more detailed report to the members of the Society and Ken said we needed to have a questionnaire asking members (and perhaps former members) what they want.

We need to clarify our legal position.

The Society's Council will have a report to members available within six months.

## Election of Office Bearers and Council

Completed nominations had been received for the following posts:

- President: Des Loughney
- Vice-President: Iain McEachran, David Small
- Secretary: Graham Rule
- Treasurer: Alan Ellis
- Council Member: Maurice Frank, Danny Gallacher, Pete MacDonald, Alastair Mackie, Ken Thomas, Adelaide Webster

As there were no more nominations than places an election was not required.

## AOB

Best wishes from George Grant.

Duncan Hale-Sutton has suggested that notices be sent electronically.

The next meeting is on 7th April at which Alan Pickup will be speaking on “Saturn and Cassini”.

Closed 22:00